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No. 23.

CASE OF MAL-PRACTICE.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

DEAR SIR,—A case of mal-practice has just been before our Superior Court, which is not without interest to the profession. Dr. J. S. Oatman, of this city, a reputable physician, attended a carman, æt. 64, for a comminuted fracture of the femur near the condyles. The patient being an aged man, and suffering under depraved health at the time, had also an erysipelatous affection of the limb of some months' standing, accompanied with œdema of the injured leg. The inflammation and swelling which supervened immediately after the accident, precluded any very accurate diagnosis, and the morbid condition of the patient, and especially of the limb, forbid any considerable pressure, either by bandages or the application of extension. The posture found to give the patient most comfort was that of semi-flexion, and the double inclined plane was adopted, the apparatus of Palmer and Roe being preferred, upon which the limb was placed, and suitably secured. At the proper time, the usual attention was paid to the careful adjustment of the fragments of the bone, and all the extension and counter-extension which was admissible, seems to have been duly made. On the 30th day the fracture was found firmly united by Dr. Cheesman, who examined it, and the limb being measured was found shortened two or two and a half inches.

At this juncture, a young physician in the neighborhood called in to see the patient, without the knowledge of the attending surgeons, and with the consent of the patient invited Drs. Parker and Wood to visit him, both of whom gave it as their opinion that no surgical treatment was called for, or would be admissible. A son of the patient soon after called upon Dr. Oatman, and significantly intimated a proposition to settle with him for a *quid pro quo*, as the only alternative to a suit for mal-practice; the shortening of the limb being now made a ground of complaint, unskilfulness and neglect being alleged, &c. The doctor, not relishing such ingratitude in lieu of his fee for faithful services, was not very patient under it, resenting it as an outrage, and acted accordingly. After six months had passed, the suit was brought, and the testimony of Drs. Mott, Parker, Wood, Reese, Post, Cheesman, &c., was so conclusive and unanimous, that the plaintiff's counsel would have submitted patiently to a non-suit, but the jury acquitted the defendant, so that his triumph was complete.

Enclosed you will find a newspaper report of the testimony, should your limits allow its use.

MEDICUS.

New York, June 2., 1846.

On the trial the Counsel of the Plaintiff, as instructed, attempted to show that the fracture had been badly managed; that the apparatus used was not the best; that there was not sufficient extension and counter-extension used to prevent the shortening of the limb, and that there had been thus a want of attention and skill on the part of the doctor, by reason of which he was left a cripple. But his case was overthrown by his own witnesses, Dr. James R. Wood and Dr. Parker, both of whom examined the limb after some thirty days, and agreed that it had been a bad case of crushed bone, in which the shortening of the limb was unavoidable, under any amount of skill; and the latter gave it as his judgment that the patient was exceedingly well off to have recovered from such an accident with both his life and limb, and with no other disaster than a short leg.

But, though Dr. Oatman might here have rested his case, and submitted it to the Jury on the prosecutor's own testimony, yet his Counsel deemed it due to his professional character to proceed to show, by witnesses well known for their surgical skill and experience, that he was blameless in this case and its results.

Dr. Valentine Mott, a surgeon of forty years experience, testified that more or less shortening of the limb is uniformly the result after fractured thigh, even in the most favorable circumstances; but that the age of this patient, the bad character of the fracture, the erysipelatous state of the limb, and all the circumstances, were averse to a favorable result, and likely to increase the extent of the shortening.

Dr. David M. Reese is a physician and surgeon of twenty-five years' practice, and testified that from the nature of the injury as described by the witnesses, there could be no doubt that it was an oblique and comminuted fracture, which is always unfavorable and renders a shortening of the limb inevitable. In such a fracture there is always injury of the soft parts, which complicates the case by increasing the risk of inflammation and swelling, and renders it liable to be followed by irritative fever and other constitutional disturbance. The age of the patient was unfavorable; the erysielas, and especially the dropsical swelling of the limb alleged to be present, would forbid any considerable extent of pressure by bandages, or extension of the limb, without risking the loss of both limb and life. The Dictionary of Dr. Cooper, shown by him, was regarded as good surgical authority by the profession everywhere, and had been edited by himself, all the notes having been republished in London by the author in his last edition.

Dr. A. C. Post, one of the surgeons of the New York Hospital, stated that in such a fracture the injury to the soft parts would interfere with the extension of the limb; and has known two cases in which the attempt to make extension and counter-extension resulted in mortification, and the thighs had to be amputated. The age of the patient and diseased state of the limb increased these dangers. In all such cases, a

very considerable shortening of the limb takes place under the best treatment and care, and the removal of the foot bandage by the patient, as in this case, would increase it. In half an hour after such an accident, he has known the swelling to be so great as to forbid any success in ascertaining definitely the nature of the injury.

Dr. Cheesman, a physician and surgeon of long experience, saw this patient with Dr. Oatman, with great difficulty inspected the thigh, being opposed by both the patient and his friends. He found that it had been an oblique and comminuted fracture, now united. He found the limb shorter than the other, as it uniformly is in such cases. He never knew an exception, and concurs fully in the opinion that the age and morbid state of the limb in this case forbid any greater extension or pressure than was used, and was obstructed in his inquiries by the disturbance and resistance made to his examination.

Similar and corroborative testimony was given by Dr. Dickinson and Mr. McCord. Dr. Shepherd was then examined, who had attended the case throughout, and bore testimony that there was no want of attention or skill on the part of Dr. Oatman, who manifested throughout a becoming interest in the patient's welfare. He proved the morbid state of the limb, the disturbance of the bandage by the patient, and the adverse circumstances which had to be contended with in the management of the case.

Dr. Stoothoff testified that he accompanied Dr. Cheesman and Dr. Oatman on their visit to the patient, and learned from the latter that Dr. Cockroft, junior, had been there, and the son confessed that he had denied it, to conceal this clandestine visit.

In the progress of the trial there was a display of surgical apparatus, thigh bones both sound and broken, together with a beautiful model of the thigh taken from the Anatomical Venus, now exhibiting at the American Museum, recently imported from France by P. T. Barnum, Esq., who kindly loaned it for the purpose of enlightening the court, bar and jury, as to the muscles concerned in fractured thigh.

At the conclusion of the trial, after the counsel had been heard respectively, Mr. Sullivan, in an ingenious and forcible argument for the plaintiff, and Mr. Gerard in an able and eloquent speech for the defendant, the jury retired with instructions from the court to bring in a sealed verdict, which they rendered yesterday morning for the defendant, having only remained in the room a few minutes.

On the verdict being returned to the court, the large audience present manifested high satisfaction, and Dr. Oatman received the congratulations of his friends.

THE LATE APPOINTMENT IN TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

DEAR SIR,—In the May No., 1846, of "The Western Lancet," is the following:—"The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.—In the

No. of this Journal for April 8, the Editor has seen proper to admit an *anonymous* communication, casting reproach on a late appointment in Transylvania University. We must confess our great surprise that a respectable Journal would so far forget what is due to the profession, as to admit such an article. In the first place, the article itself is unworthy of notice, because of the futile points referred to; in the next place, it is anonymous; and, lastly, the closing paragraph, as well as other features, so clearly disclose the writer's *motives*, that we cannot discover upon what principle it could have been admitted," &c. Leaving yourself to reply to that portion which relates to you in your editorial capacity, I beg a page or two to present a few remarks which seem to me appropriate by way of sequent to the paragraph of the sapient editor of "*The Western Lancet*." I might very properly refrain from replying to the notice, couched, as it is, in terms familiar with individuals who compulsively defend untenable positions; but as, unfortunately, my communication was anonymous, I feel in honor bound to remove, at least, that objection. In doing this, I protest against having ascribed to me anything of a spirit of contention. It is unnecessary for me to recapitulate here any of the "points" considered in the anonymous article, as every one who will read this will have perused that communication. But as the editorial paragraph contains an intimation of improper motives, I deem it necessary to affirm, that the writer was impelled to the preparation of the article, by an appreciation of the want of proper facilities by medical preceptors, to become acquainted with the capabilities and abilities of medical professors. Again—in the great discussion now being had upon the subject of medical reform, he was convinced that the merits of medical professors should become subjects of special consideration before the ends intended to be produced by the discussion can be attained. When a medical student, of the present day, enters the lecture hall of a distinguished professor, and hears him declaim against the legitimate tendency of Brown's *sthenia* and *asthenia*, and tell of the number who have prematurely found a tomb from the unreasonable administration of stimulants; of Thomson's "*cold is death and heat is life*," and hear described the horrid effects consequent upon a process of steaming, and the administration of Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 6, to destroy the balance of power; of Broussais's *gastro-enterite*, and learns how many lives have been sacrificed at the altar of this hypothesis; of Cooke's congestion of the *vena cavæ*, and listens to an account, not alone of the immediate deaths, but of the long list of unhealthy effects consequent upon *the unconditional application of the therapeutics* of that teacher—he is impressed with a sense of the wisdom and the comprehensiveness of the mind of the lecturer who has enabled him to appreciate correctly those views which *have* influenced the medical public. But the professor has a favorite of his own; and the admiration of himself which he has excited, prevents the student from apprehending the truth that therapeutical indications are variable, and that all systems or even positions which lead to the unconditional application of any particular remedial means, destroy the capableness for correct observation and comprehension of diseased

action; and the dogmatical manner and terms in which the system or position is depended, completely removes all doubt, and fully satisfies the humble seeker after knowledge that he has attained its full consummation. This is the reason why physicians, in consultations, are daily thwarted in applying therapeutical means which the attendant circumstances clearly indicate, by the colleague practitioner's strenuously contending for another, and presenting no reason for the partiality save the "over-powering argument" that some professor says, "in this affection," &c. To prevent, if possible, an increase of the number of those who give "credit to the mere *verba magistri*, and place implicit confidence in a scientific assertion, because it proceeds from this or that professor," and from a perusal of his papers being constrained to judge Doctor Annan as a teacher who uttered his edicts with so much positiveness, as would tend to the increase of such practitioners, I deemed it my duty to call attention to his mode of teaching, and thus incidentally show his capabilities, &c. But it seems that the "paper is unworthy of notice because of the futile points referred to." To this I reply in the words of the proverb—"Straws show which way the wind blows." In paying this tribute to my communication, the editor of the *Lancet* should have remembered that the points referred to were considered by Professor Annan of sufficient importance to employ his pen in producing manuscript enough to make a full page of printed matter for the *American Journal*; and surely any "points" of sufficient profundity for his intelligence are far from futile, and fully worthy of investigation by individuals of less pretensions. But there are others as capable of judging of the character of communications and their "points" as the puissant editor of the *Lancet*; and there is a physician, whom I am proud to claim as a friend, and from whose letter, without his permission, I extract the following, by way of remedying the effects which might be produced by the assertion of the editor. "I think it probable the new professor of Transylvania will not feel himself under any particular obligation to the Knoxville correspondent of the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*. Should he manifest resentment, the writer can justly accuse him of ingratitude, for he can, if he has the proper capacity, be more circumspect, and more *correct*, for the future, by paying the attention to the correspondent's strictures which their importance demands."

Having thus, as I believe, shown the importance of medical papers of the nature of my anonymous communication, and acted from a sense of duty in contributing it to your pages, permit me to say that no individual will sooner than myself accord to Prof. Annan praise as a teacher, when assured it is meet and proper. That I have no personal antipathies to Prof. Annan, I hope will appear from future communications which I propose to furnish your *Journal*, so soon as leisure will permit, in which "the points" of certain papers of other professors, will be examined, and an attempt made to show their bad tendencies.

Knoxville, Tenn., June 15th, 1846.

F. A. RAMSEY, M.D.

SOUTHERN DISTRICT MEDICAL SOCIETY.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—Supposing your readers, especially those of them who are fellows of the Massachusetts Medical Society, might feel some curiosity to know what is transpiring in the several District Societies, and hoping to draw a like communication from other districts, thus giving to each an opportunity to profit by the experience of the rest, I am induced to send you for publication the following account of the rise and progress of that to which I belong.

The Southern District Medical Society was chartered in April, 1839, and organized soon after. Previous to that time, opportunities for forming personal acquaintance with the different members of the medical profession within the limits prescribed by our charter, were exceedingly rare. They seldom occurred, except in casual meetings or on occasional consultations. Many of the profession were total strangers to each other, ignorant of each other's notions of disease and its treatment, and each uninformed even of the medical qualifications of most of his neighbors. There were some dozen or more fellows of the Massachusetts Medical Society residing within the limits referred to, who, in consequence of the distance and inconvenience of getting to Boston, seldom met there together, and there were also many respectable practitioners of medicine within the same circuit who for similar reasons had never thought it worth their while to become members of that Society—making, in all, thirty or forty persons who were laboring faithfully each within his own sphere, but without any convenient means of exchanging the results of his medical experience with his own immediate neighbors.

To provide for what seemed to be so much wanted, a means of collecting and diffusing information and of cultivating good fellowship among medical men in this region, the members of the New Bedford Medical Association, which had been established a year or two previous, having in that short period experienced the good effects of that association upon their own vicinity, determined to call a convention at that place for the purpose of considering the expediency of forming a District Society. The convention was well attended. Nearly all who had been written to upon the subject appeared on the appointed day, even from the distant towns of Nantucket* and Martha's Vineyard. The meeting was a spirited one, and but one opinion seemed to prevail in regard to the objects for which the convention had been called, which was that such a society was much needed here. Those who were not already fellows of the Massachusetts Medical Society were willing to become so if a convenient place could be agreed upon for holding the meetings. New Bedford was fixed upon, and measures were immediately taken to procure a charter, which in due time was granted.

Our By-laws provide for two meetings in the year. The annual meeting is held on the second Wednesday in May, and the other on the second Wednesday in November. At the former the usual business of

* Nantucket was formerly included within the district, but has since withdrawn.

such meetings is transacted, and a public address is delivered upon some subject connected with medicine and surgery, by a gentleman appointed for that purpose at the previous annual meeting. At the latter, written communications are read, also by appointment, and at both meetings discussions are held upon the subjects brought forward in the address or in the communications, or by verbal communications or reports of cases, which are usually participated in by most of the members present. A portion of the time at each meeting has been set apart for the gratuitous examination of such cases as may be presented for advice, &c. &c., and on the day of each meeting the members dine together, in May at the expense of the Society, and in November, hitherto, at the invitation of the New Bedford Medical Association.

The Society has been in operation now seven years. Through its influence some twenty members have been added to the Massachusetts Medical Society, an additional medical district has been created, and a Board of Censors established. A distinct line has been drawn between true medical worth and empirical pretension, and harmony and good feeling in our intercourse with each other have been established. Our meetings have been well attended, and the duties growing out of them have been faithfully and cheerfully performed. Indeed, the interest which was felt at the formation of the Society has been growing with its growth, and we believe the members look forward to the stated meetings with anticipations of pleasure and profit, which nothing but ill health or indispensable duties are suffered to prevent their enjoying.

Among the communications which have been read, those upon the following subjects may be mentioned as evincing considerable labor and research, as well as valuable personal observation, viz., "*The Pathology of Scrofula*"—"Rheumatism and its Treatment"—"*A Discourse on the Action of Lead on the Animal Economy*." In this the opinion is maintained that the carbonate is the only salt of lead which acts specifically as a poison on the animal system, and that when the morbid effects of lead are apparently produced by its others salts, it is to be attributed to a decomposition and conversion of it into the carbonate. The same paper contains some valuable remarks upon the chemical composition of the water of New Bedford, and the danger of using it when conducted through lead pipes. Several cases of disease of great severity from this cause, which had fallen under the author's notice, were related. "*Effects of Ergot on the Human System*"—"An Essay on Spinal Curvature"—"*A History of the Epidemics of New Bedford and Vicinity for the last forty years*." This was the subject of our late annual discourse, which was listened to with a great deal of interest. It was one aim with the speaker to show that all diseases become at times and under certain circumstances epidemic. Among other facts adduced in proof of this position, was the extensive prevalence of phthisis pulmonalis in the lower village of Fairhaven between the years 1808 and 1818, at a time when the inhabitants of other villages in the immediate neighborhood and the country about were enjoying their usual degree of health. This village, previous to these dates and since, has been as much exempt from this

disease as other villages of its size in New England. But between these dates the number of cases was very remarkable among persons of both sexes and of all ages and conditions; nor does there seem to have been, during this time, any peculiar tendency to other pulmonary complaints.

Other papers might be referred to, but sufficient is given to show the condition and prospects of the Society, and that its members feel strongly interested in its welfare and are earnestly engaged in endeavoring to promote its usefulness. The following are the closing remarks of one of our annual addresses, with which I will close this communication.

"This Society being the only body in this portion of the Commonwealth where men are collected together from distant towns to discuss medical questions, much responsibility falls upon it in regard to its influence on the community, and the measures it may take to promote the public welfare. That this responsibility is felt by its members, there can be no reason to doubt. The spirit with which the first call upon them for its organization was responded to, the promptness with which its stated meetings have been from time to time attended, and the fidelity with which the duties that have devolved upon them have been performed during the five years of its existence, is a sufficient guarantee that any new duties which may arise, or claims which the community may have upon them, will be discharged with a like promptness and fidelity.

"This is our fifth anniversary, and we may congratulate ourselves upon our past success and the prospects of future prosperity. Every year has served to strengthen those ties which should ever bind together in one brotherhood those of like pursuits and occupations, and more especially those like ourselves, whose chief aim is to afford relief to the distresses of our fellow men. Every year has awakened in us an increasing interest in the objects for which the Society was formed. Better notions of professional intercourse and etiquette have been acquired, and the means have been provided of gathering for the improvement of the whole the individual experience of each. As a healthy infancy promises a thriving youth and vigorous manhood, we may look forward to the future condition of our Society with confidence in its growing influence for good upon us and the community about us."

Yours, &c. S. S.

QUACKERY IN NEW YORK.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—For the first time finding myself in the great emporium of everything, ycelpt the London of America, I have thought it might interest your professional readers somewhat, if I should furnish a few notes of my gleanings here in the way of quackery. From all I can see here during a brief sojourn, I should think that the population consists of two classes about equally divided, one half being employed in *making and vending* physic, and the other half in *swallowing* it; but my *penchant* is with the former moiety, among whom I have been making a tour of inspection. The better to effect my purpose, I have doffed the doctor, and turned

invalid, counterfeiting, as you will see, all manner of diseases, and amusing myself by visiting the quacks, and asking questions like a veritable yankee, as I am.

Soon after my arrival, I read a flaming editorial in the papers concerning a certain dentist, who, tired of the slow profits of tooth pulling, announces himself a curer of consumption, having been cured himself. You may be sure that I hastened to see this prodigy, and putting on a woe-be-gone face, obtained an interview. He is a very pale and plausible dentist, I assure you, wholly disinterested and vastly religious, as a man surely ought to be with one foot in the grave, for such a cure as his I would not covet, since it gave me the horrors to look at him, and especially to hear his sepulchral voice, but little above a whisper, though he tells of his wonderful cure. All I learned from him was, that he thought I had the consumption, or would be likely to have it, if I did not catch the asthma, which he said was a certain "preventative." He showed me his remedy in the shape of a tube, exactly like those used in Boston and elsewhere by deaf persons, though instead of placing one end to the ear, it is applied to the lips; and he showed me how to breathe through the tube by inhaling and expelling the air, which he says affords exercise to the lungs, and thus cures the consumption by producing a kind of artificial asthma. He showed me a pamphlet which he benevolently gives away, and a book which he sells along with the tube for five dollars, to those able to buy it, half price to ministers, and, it is said, he gives tubes gratis to the poor. The book is mainly a reprint of the old work of Ramage, of London, entitled "Consumption Curable," which was shown up at the time in the British and Foreign Medical Review, and never before deemed worth re-publication, until this effort to revive his tube in America, after it has become a stale joke in England as the relic of the mountebank St. John Long, from whom Ramage took his cue.

As I was altogether incog., I listened with great gusto to the narrative of this dentist doctor's cure, for which it seems he went to London, together with an account of the celebrated hospital of Dr. Ramage, under royal patronage, which he described to me as one of the most important public institutions in Great Britain. And he told me of the wonderful cures he had made since his return. I found he was a thorough-paced homœopathist, and did not depend upon the tube alone in any case, but advised those who used it, to take the little sugar pellets of Hahnemann, and he boasted of the patronage of that school of physicians in the city, who, it seems, recognize him as a worthy coadjutor.

I need scarcely add that in our conversation he betrayed an utter ignorance of the pathology of consumption, blundering in every attempt to describe or discriminate cases, so that I left him with amazement that any editor should so far forget himself as to admit into his columns an eulogy upon so illiterate a pretender; but I suppose it is all paid for under the cover of advertisements.

I had gone but a little way from his door, before I met an old physician and friend to whom I related my rencontre with this rival of the faculty; from whom I learned that hundreds of these tubes have been bought by

the dupes of this folly, and that instances of rapid fatality are known to the profession, resulting from the effort to exercise tuberculous lungs with this villainous tube. The profits of the trade, however, exceed those derived from pulling teeth.

My next visitation was paid to a celebrated advertising quack, who cures all incurable diseases by a combination of homœopathic medicines prescribed by a *sleeping partner* in the person of a lady, who, when her eyes are closed by mesmeric passes, can look into the great cavities of the body, examine minutely the several internal organs, detect the nature and seat of the malady, and direct the preparation of the infallible remedy in every case. The learned doctor has such confidence in his female associate in practice, that he does not presume to give an opinion without consulting her ladyship, taking care always to mesmerize her into the somnambulist state, for the reason that she knows nothing at all when awake, but is no sooner put asleep than she discourses like an oracle, upon pathology and therapeutics; whereupon the doctor having received his *fee* for his sleeping partner's advice, is prepared for *another fee* to furnish her prescriptions to the patient. Having learned this state of facts, I retired, not being willing to wait for my turn among so many patients as I found ready to precede me, so that this "craft has great gains," and the twain are driving a profitable trade.

I now thought I would look after the galvanic tribe of quacks, who are innumerable here. Electricity, galvanism and magnetism, separately and combined, are remedial agencies greatly in vogue at present among quacks. There are some who use the galvanic battery in the usual way for all cases indiscriminately; while there are others who have magnetic plasters for the outside of the body, with magnetic pills for the inside, by which they have a perpetual current of electro-magnetic fluid flowing with as much certainty and regularity as Prof. Morse's telegraph, provided the patient continues to wear the plaster and take the pills. But all these are mere pigmies compared with the celebrated professors and doctors who vend galvanic rings, bracelets and belts, together with magnetic fluids, and I contented myself with calling on the most celebrated of these. I put his rings on every finger, and thumb, with his bracelets on my arms and legs, and his belt about my body, offering to buy them all *for my complaints*, provided I could feel that they had any effect upon my nerves. But though his "fluid" was sedulously applied, I had no more evidence of the generation of galvanic influence than though the rings had been made of wood, the bracelets of hair, and the belt of leather. He assured me that many persons were shocked to the ends of their fingers and toes by applying a single galvanic ring, and he showed certificates of numerous cures of frightful disease which had been thus wrought. Of course he professed to be astonished at the failure upon my person, and wondered how I could be so insensible, especially as I assured him I was "nervous." I proposed that he should put on the rings himself, and tell me candidly whether he could feel any galvanism; but he declined the test, alleging that he was satisfied with witnessing their success in others, and he appealed to his profitable trade in the arti-

cles as proof of their curative powers not to be gainsayed. I declined making any purchases of the mountebank, and pursued my tour among the other quacks of the city, of which you shall hear in my next.

A PERIPATETIC AND COSMOPOLITE.

CEREBRAL EXTRAVASATION IN A NEW-BORN INFANT, FOLLOWED BY SPONTANEOUS RECOVERY.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

Nov. 4, 1845, at 9 o'clock, A. M., I was called to attend Mrs. S., in labor with her first child. She is a very small woman, of 20 years, and was suffering regular labor pains. An examination per vaginam detected an extremely small pelvis, with dilatation of the os tince, and natural presentation.

The uterine contractions became more severe in the afternoon, and well nigh exhausted the patience and strength of my feeble patient. Still a gradual advance of the head, and uninterrupted regularity of the labor pains, gave me entire confidence in leaving the case to nature.

She gave birth to a fine boy weighing six pounds at 2 o'clock next morning. The head of the child was preternaturally elongated, exhibiting a soft, pulpy tumor, of the size and shape of half of a large orange over the lambdoid suture, to the right of the posterior fontanelle, not disturbing the bones.

As the tumor continued unchanged for two weeks, feeling soft and pulpy without fluctuation, Dr. Peirson, of Salem, saw it, and we were flattered to believe, that, as the child enjoyed perfect health, the tumor would recede. Evaporating lotions were directed only; and in two weeks from that time the tumor began to decrease, and in four or five days it had entirely disappeared.

The mother recovered in a few weeks, and both continued well.

Lynn, June 24th, 1846.

JAMES M. NYE.

HEMORRHAGE RELIEVED BY ERGOT.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

Menorrhagia.—Called to prescribe for Mrs. M., aged 44, in the summer of 1845, for menorrhagia. Had been troubled with the complaint five years, and had followed the advice of many physicians without any benefit whatever. Her statement was, she did not believe there was any remedy in the world she had not tried. At this time, one week before the expected monthly turn, her countenance was blanched; pulse frequent, and of that lacerated feel which denotes the hemorrhagic pulse. Yet able to do light work. Prescribed ergot pulv. in five-grain dose four times per day, to commence when she began to feel the pains in her back, which generally occurred two or three days before the flow. The flow not coming on after the usual time of pain in the back, she, fearing

an entire suppression, diminished the dose, when she had a healthy flow, free from coagulation. She said, six months after, that she had been able to stay her complaints by similar doses of the remedy, and enjoyed improved health. She however used, in the intervals, Griffith's mixture—a compound of not very modern discovery, but not the less useful in similar cases. In a number of other uncomplicated cases of the kind, for the last two years, I have prescribed the same remedy with entire temporary, and in some instances permanent, success, and have had no necessity of resorting to any other.

Epistaxis.—Called to Mrs. B., a young married woman, of vigorous habit of body (in 1841), who had been spontaneously bleeding from the nose two hours. Blood flowed in a stream; no increase of frequency in the pulse, and felt perfectly well otherwise. Had tried cold vinegar and water to the forehead and nape of the neck. Gave her a teaspoonful of tinct. ergot, made from two ounces of the ergot in a pint of proof spirit. In a minute the flow lessened, and at the end of five minutes it entirely ceased and returned no more.

Mr. B., age about 60, a red-faced, bloated drunkard from his youth up, commenced bleeding from his nose on the morn of May 7, 1845. His family physician was sent for, who ordered cold applications to the head and the snuffing of alum water up the nasal passages. At one o'clock, the following night, I saw him. He was almost pulseless; skin moist and exsanguineous; had vomited a number of times, and with much difficulty he was persuaded to lie still in bed. The intervals of his bleeding were from half an hour to an hour. It was in one of these intervals I was with him. Gave him ten grains pulv. ergot, and ordered him five grains every two hours. Laid his head lower than his body in bed, and directed, on the occasion of a return of the bleeding, that his arms should be elevated according to M. Negrier's method. In about the usual time the blood flowed, but instead of the same profuse quantity as before, only about one to two gills was lost, and he had no return afterwards. I should infer from this case that the ergot had the whole effect in arresting the accessions of the bleeding after the first turn, but the elevated position of the arms might have assisted in diminishing the flow at that time.

Case of Hemorrhage from the Alveolar Socket.—After the extraction of a tooth, Mr. L., about 35 years of age, subject to hemorrhage of difficult control from the nose and mouth, applied to me a number of years since to staunch the blood issuing from the alveolar socket, from which a tooth had been extracted two days before. The socket had been plugged with dry sponge, sponge with nut galls, and sponge with creosote, to no effect. I cleaned out the socket thoroughly, and introduced moistened sponge covered with pulv. ergot, and the bleeding ceased. I have extracted one tooth for him since, plugging it immediately as above, with total arrest of the bleeding; a circumstance unknown to him, since he has possessed this peculiar diathesis of a hemorrhagic character, having had several teeth extracted.

Case of Hemorrhage from a Cut.—Mr. W., about 32 years of age, June, 1846, was cut by a chisel in the upper portion of the nates, half

an inch in depth and one inch in length. Did not feel any inconvenience, save continuous bleeding. On examination two hours after, the blood simply dropped from the wound. Prepared to dress with lint and adhesive plaster, first washing the parts with cold water. Could detect a slight per saltum motion of the blood in the wound. Brought the edges of the wound accurately together by lint and plasters, and applied compress, retaining it with my hand. After continuing compression for half an hour in this manner, and the blood oozing out at the sides constantly, I gave a half teaspoonful pulv. ergot, and placed him from an upright position on to his stomach on the bed. The bleeding soon ceased, and additional compress and a bandage was applied. After three hours the bleeding returned, as he was seated in a chair. I placed him on the bed as before, giving him half a teaspoonful ergot, again washed out the wound, and as the orifice of any bleeding vessel did not appear, I again tried compression, which failed as before. I then removed the dressings, and having cleansed the wound a third time of all coagula which was slight and slow to form, I filled it with finely pulv. ergot, and brought it together as before; after which there was no bleeding, and the man went to work the next morning, and has had no farther trouble.

Remarks.—Although the position of his body was changed from an upright to a recumbent posture, when the first dose of ergot was administered internally, yet the ergot must claim principally if not wholly the share of arresting the blood; as when in three hours after compresses alone were applied, in the recumbent position, the bleeding continued. Doubtless the applying the ergot to the bleeding surface produced the final result.

General Remarks.—This treatment of hemorrhage by ergot is no newly discovered treatment of my own. Yet I believe many of the profession do not avail themselves of its practical benefits, except in the uterine form. I have also administered ergot in hemorrhages from the lungs and bowels, with like good effect. I have never witnessed any injurious effects from its use. In a case of an intemperate man in incipient phthisis from tubercle, who had epistaxis, and whose pulse was frequent and hard, I gave it without benefit; thus showing that bloodletting and free purging cannot be dispensed with in the active hemorrhages; and my experience is that its most salutary influences are felt in the more passive forms.

Yours respectfully,

JOHN YALE.

Ware, June, 28, 1846.

DR. INGALLS'S CASE OF TUMOR.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—The anonymous communication in the Journal of the 24th of June, purporting to be from the pen of one L. W., of New Britain, Conn., would have remained unnoticed were it not to correct a misstatement which might lead the public into an error. It is difficult to discriminate which is the most remarkable characteristic of this production, hebetude of intellect, or dishonesty of purpose.

Had the writer possessed the candor of a man of science, or the ingenuousness of a gentleman, he would have made a fair statement of what was said respecting the nature of the tumor, which is as follows :—A tumor situated at the root of the molares, which bore a *strong resemblance* to an osteocele, of a most intractable character ;" and, had he possessed a common share of acumen, he would have noticed the concluding clause of the last sentence was italicized ; and had he not been under the operation of an allopathic dose of stupidity of the highest potency, he would have perceived the object was to caution *surgeons* not to proceed too hastily to the performance of a formidable operation, when a cure might be effected by two globules of plumbum. WM. INGALLS, M.D.

June 26, 1846.

N. B.—I shall send you a reply soon to J. C.'s communication.

Yours, W. I.

ON AMERICAN BROMINE.

By George W. Patrick.

THIS interesting substance, within the last two years, has been found very abundantly in the bittern or mother liquor, remaining after the crystallization of salt from the evaporated waters of the Salt Springs, near Pittsburg, Pennsylvania ; and from the facility with which it is now extracted, will undoubtedly prove a source of considerable revenue to those engaged in obtaining it.

Edward Gillespie, M.D., while a student, first discovered this substance in these waters by testing them for iodine. These waters yield about 1.13 per cent. of bromine, being nearly equal to the celebrated springs of Germany. The gentlemen now engaged in obtaining it have patented their process, which is said to be so simple and economical as to enable them with very little labor to produce forty or fifty pounds of pure bromine per week. They have recently sent one hundred pounds of it to Europe, hoping to be able to bring it in successful competition with the German and French article, which for the last few years has commanded such a high price as to be little used in this country as a medicinal agent—being chiefly consumed in the daguerreotype process. This bromine has been pronounced by chemists here who have examined it, as purer than the European article as generally found in our markets. Its sensible properties are precisely similar to the foreign article, having the density, odor and color belonging to this element. In one respect, however, I find a discrepancy. Bromine is stated by authors to be soluble in alcohol ; but I have been unable to effect a proper solution of the American article in this menstruum, as it appears to decompose either strong or diluted alcohol, uniting with it in all proportions, and when a quantity of bromine is suddenly introduced into this liquid, the reaction is so violent as to occasion flashes of light and violent ebullition, until the bromine entirely disappears, and the liquid becomes colorless, having properties re-

sembling ether, probably hydrobromic ether, inasmuch as the acid which it contains is generated by the contact of bromine and alcohol.

As a medicinal agent, bromine is sometimes employed in an uncombined state, mixed with syrup of sarsaparilla or other similar vehicle; but it has been more frequently exhibited in the forms of the bromides of potassium and of iron. Three processes have been employed in obtaining the former. The first by decomposing a solution of bromide of iron with carbonate of potassa, as directed by the London Pharmacopœia; the second by passing a current of hydrosulphuric acid into bromine under water, until all the free bromine has disappeared, and saturating the solution of hydrobromic acid with carbonate of potassa; and lastly, by saturating a strong solution of caustic potassa with bromine, evaporating to dryness, and heating the dried mass to a red heat to decompose the bromate of potassa which is mixed with the bromide. I consider this process the best, as it yields the purest salt in the most perfect crystals.

Bromide of Iron.—This salt is obtained by adding bromine to iron filings in excess under water, and submitting them to a moderate heat. When the liquid assumes a greenish-yellow appearance it is filtered and evaporated rapidly to dryness in an iron vessel. Bromide of iron is a brick-red, very deliquescent salt, of an acrid styptic taste, and requires to be kept closely stopped in glass vials. This bromide has been used quite extensively in Pittsburg, Pa., as a tonic and alterative, and is considered by many physicians to be a highly efficacious preparation. This salt may be known by the liberation of bromine, by the addition of sulphuric acid.

The bitter waters, in a very concentrated state, have been employed with decided advantage in this city as a counter-irritant in rheumatic and neuralgic affections. The liquid contains some of the salts of bromine with a small quantity of iodine, besides chloride of sodium and other salts, and has a specific gravity of 1.419. After a few applications a plentiful crop of pustules are produced, which pass away in a short time after ceasing its use. There is little doubt that this article will prove to be an agent of considerable importance in the above-named complaints. There are several other preparations of bromine which have occasionally been used in medicine; they are prepared like the corresponding iodides; among these the bromide of sulphur has been used with advantage in cutaneous affections. It is formed by the direct union of its elements. A compound of bromine and iodine, has been much used in daguerreotype operations.—*The American Jour. of Phar.*

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, JULY 8, 1848.

Connecticut Medical Society.—Like every other interest in the land of steady habits, the medical fraternity, both individually and collectively,

is in a healthful, prosperous condition. On the 13th and 14th of May, the State Society was in session at New Haven. Having ascertained that their finances were satisfactory, there being \$416,39 in the treasury, Archibald Welch, M.D., was elected president—and an excellent choice it was. He is ardently devoted to the interests of the profession, and no person could have been selected, it strikes us, who would personally exert himself more industriously, to sustain the high reputation of the Society. A proposition was introduced by Dr. Campbell, to petition the Legislature to reduce the price of lecture tickets, to ten dollars each, at the New Haven Medical School. The object, undoubtedly, is to increase the facilities of study; in other words, if the tuition is less than it now is, doctors might be manufactured much faster. If the price of lectures is ever reduced, the faculty had better quit the business altogether. A wood-sawyer actually earns more money in the streets in a good freezing winter, than a professor of surgery gets by a course of lectures in an ordinary country institution.

Things legitimately belonging to the profession in Connecticut, are managed by the brotherhood in their own way, and no disposition is manifested to usurp their rights or privileges by any power delegated by the people. For example, the Medical Society nominate the medical instructors in Yale College, the medical superintendent of the Retreat for the Insane at Hartford, and, with a vigilant eye to the common good of society, a committee is always present at the examinations for doctorates, to prevent the honor being thrown away upon blockheads.

E. K. Hunt, M.D., of Hartford, was elected dissertator for the next anniversary. By a resolution the County Societies were authorized to elect delegates to the great National Convention in Philadelphia, the first Wednesday in May, 1847.

Lastly, a dissertation was delivered on Typhus Fever, by Theodore Sill, M.D. We hardly know how to comment on this discourse, simply because the subject is hacknied, and all observations upon the topic would be nothing but trite repetitions. In the first place, it is one of the strange affairs belonging to civilization, that no two writers agree in their views upon fever of any type, notwithstanding the avalanche of learning that annually rolls down from high places. Again, it is equally curious, as a historical fact, that fevers are no better managed in this glorious scientific era than they were by Hippocrates himself. And it is a humiliating acknowledgment, but nevertheless true, that the mortality by typhus, according to the statistics of the civilized world, has not been lessened by the skill of physicians. This is said on our own responsibility, and simply means that we are not so wise as we imagine, in the treatment of some diseases, the laws of which are not yet understood.

Dr. Sill evinces a thorough acquaintance with his subject, as writers generally treat it; and shows a commendable acquaintance with all the symptoms, anatomical appearances, and remedies resorted to by the best practitioners, to say nothing of the literature of fevers, with which it is apparent he is equally conversant. Another point should not be overlooked by the reader of Dr. Sill's essay, viz., its brevity. There is nothing in it superfluous, and he had the good sense to close when he had written what he deemed essential, instead of worrying the audience with a tedious array of words, as though he were speaking against time.

Health and Accommodations at Saratoga.—In a line from Dr. North, dated Saratoga Springs, 30th June, we learn that the invalids that have arrived there, have, during the month, presented very nearly the average number. Hence, he infers, what he has often found true, that the state of the public health, during the preceding winter and spring, has been just about an average condition.

The accommodations for sojourners are every year improving, and the boarding establishments, large and small, are now completely ready for company. There is a morning and afternoon train of cars regularly, both from Albany and Troy.

Contributors to Health.—While perusing Mr. Shattuck's investigations, page by page, in his recent report to the City Council on the census of this metropolis, we came to a place in Appendix Y, headed *Contributors to Health*. The query came up at once—who does actually contribute to health? Embraced in that particular division, there are 566 individuals, classed under sixteen different kinds of business, recognized as contributing to that important result. 1st, there are 8 bath-house keepers. They are unquestionably contributors to health. 2d, 10 botanic medicines dealers. Doubtful. 3d, 12 botanic physicians—presumed to be mainly Thomsonians. Doubtful. 4th, 15 chemists—one half of whom, at least, know far less of the science than Sir Michael Faraday. 5th, 57 dentists—a little army, perpetually on the increase. We coincide with Mr. Shattuck, in conceding that they are contributors to health, and he might have added, to good looks too, which is no small affair, where one's facial appearance is a letter of introduction. 6th, 5 drug brokers. What has brokerage, the mere matter of buying, selling and getting gain, to do with contributing to public health? 7th, 169 druggists and apothecaries. A formidable host, which our homœopathic friends believe do more towards deranging the public health, than in maintaining it at a given standard. 8th, 1 electrician. His vocation is shocking to the people. 9th, 4 gymnasium keepers. Their profession meets the entire approval of all classes of citizens, and their establishments are admitted, without hesitation, to contribute to the public health. 10th, 5 leechers, and perhaps 10. Of the utility of the branch of business they conduct, there can be little or no difference of opinion. 11th, 6 mineral teeth makers. They are identified with dentists. 12th, 90 nurses—all excellent in the sick room, and eminently contributing to the restoration of the sick to health. 13th, 226 physicians, including 10 female doctresses—and here there must necessarily be a difference of opinion. Some who are included in this catalogue, are as totally unfit to administer to the diseased body, as they would be to conduct an expedition to Arcturus. One of the number was reputed to sell excellent butcher's meat, two years ago; another had the reputation of being a pretty good carpenter, before he settled in Boston; and so we might dissect but half a dozen more, who are not qualified to practise medicine. Within this category are included several women, all thrown in as make weights, under the general term of contributors to health. That they understand plain housewifery, and how to patch their husband's coat sleeves, far better than they could repair a broken constitution, is very probable. Yet we have no objection to mere water gruel carriers being ranked among those who contribute something to the public health. 14th, 24 sextons—who

contribute to the public health, by burying some of the bad practice of the poor appendages of the profession. 15th, 5 truss makers, 4 being females. Probably the latter are fitters-on of instruments. These are all useful in their place. 16th, and lastly, 19 undertakers, which means men who manage funerals. We shall not stop to quarrel with Mr. Shattuck about their contributions to health.

Having analyzed a part of the 6th column, with a special view to ascertaining how much we are actually indebted to certain persons in this active community, on the score of physical well-being, the conclusion is that the public health would be quite as good as it now is, if 466 of Mr. Shattuck's contributors to health were devoted to other pursuits, for which they are better qualified.

Medical Education in Paris.—Dr. Edward Ruggles, of New York, now residing in France, has the following observation in a letter recently received from him by the editor. "It is surprising how ignorant Americans are, generally, of matters of medical education and practice in Paris. Some gossiping notions of these things, in the form of familiar letters, would be instructive and interesting, and accord well with the general character of your excellent Journal." Dr. Ruggles has ascertained that to excel, in Paris, one must be laborious in his researches in medicine. Without indefatigable application, at least, it is quite impossible to keep pace with modern discoveries and improvements.

Fruitfulness of Foreigners in Boston.—In Broad street, a low, water-edge street in Boston, in which Irish families are inconveniently thick, Mr. Shattuck, author of the Boston Census, says there are 2131 inhabitants—and that the births amount to *one in fifteen* of the whole population. This prodigious fecundity, he continues, is a most remarkable characteristic of our foreign population, and generally prevails throughout the city. It is, no doubt, one of the principal causes of the increase in the number of deaths among children under five years of age. In some sections of the city, the births do not, according to the same authority, amount to 1 in 50 of the population. The proportion of births to the population, according to late returns, was in England, 1 in 31; in France, 1 in 35; in Austria, 1 in 26; in Prussia, 1 in 27; in Russia, 1 in 23.

Hippocrates and Galen.—Some time since, we mentioned that the writings of these eminent fathers in medicine were about being rendered into English, by the venerable John Redman Coxe, M.D. We now have the pleasure of announcing that the work is in press, and will be published, "epitomized and rendered into English," in one large octavo of from seven to eight hundred pages, early in August next.

We venture the prediction that, when the volume appears, it will be found that these ancient practitioners were familiar with many things now deemed *new discoveries*, by some, too, who are not classed with superficial readers. The great learning and accuracy of the translator, affords a sure guarantee that the work as it comes to us will be a faithful representation of the originals.—*Medical Examiner.*

Influence of Medical Testimony.—Several cases have recently occurred in which the legal tribunals have wholly disregarded the testimony of physicians, introduced to establish medico-legal points. In the case of Dr. Baker, who was recently executed in this State for murder, the medical testimony went to show conclusively, that, in the opinion of the witnesses, the prisoner was insane; and yet, the jury found him guilty, and the Governor refused to remit the sentence. The opinions of the medical witnesses were, therefore, entirely disregarded.

Still more recently another instance has occurred. In the case of Albert J. Tirrell, who was recently tried in Boston for the murder of Maria Bickford, the counsel for the defence took the ground that the prisoner was a somnambulist. Upon this ground it was urged that the offence might have been committed in the somnambulatory state, while the prisoner was insensible, and therefore not accountable. Drs. Forsyth, Walter Channing and Woodward, all concurred in stating, that in a somnambulatory state, a person might commit murder unconsciously. Dr. Woodward, Superintendent of the Lunatic Asylum at Worcester, expressed the following extraordinary opinion:—"A person in a state of somnambulism might rise, dress himself, commit a homicide, run out of a house, and set it on fire." The jury acquitted the prisoner, but it was declared that the plea of somnambulism had no influence in arriving at the verdict. Here, again, medical testimony was entirely disregarded; and in view of its extraordinary character, it is not surprising that the good sense of the jury discarded it.—*Western Lancet*.

The Means of ascertaining the Efficacy of Digitalis. By M. FALKEN.

—According to M. Falken, the following plan is a means of ascertaining, in an infallible manner, whether or not digitalis possesses its virtues.

Fifty centigrammes of the powder of the leaves of digitalis are to be infused in boiling water, and after an hour to be strained off. When cold 20 to 30 drops of a solution of ferrocyanide of potash are added, prepared with 75 centigrammes of this salt, to 15 grammes of distilled water.

If the digitalis is active, the infusion becomes rather clouded, but if the cloud does not appear before fifteen or twenty minutes, we may consider the digitalis as not possessing a sufficient degree of activity.

According to M. Falken, the digitalis grown in Switzerland has proved the most active.—*Chemist*.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Dr. Leonard's Review of Dr. Holt's paper, Dr. Spence on the Fascination of Serpents, and the proceedings of the New Hampshire Medical Society, have been received.

MARRIED.—Dr. J. T. Wood, of Middleboro', Mass., to Miss A. E. Chappell.

DIED.—At Lynn, Mass., Dr. E. Smith, 77.

Report of Deaths in Boston—for the week ending July 4th, 47.—Males, 24, females, 16. Stillborn, 5. Of consumption, 5— inflammation of the bowels, 1—dropsy on the brain, 1—lung fever, 3—typhus fever, 5—tumor, 1—marasmus, 1— inflammation of the lungs, 4—measles, 4—infantile, 1— inflammation of the stomach, 1—disease of the bowels, 1—croup, 2—accidental, 2—smallpox, 1—apoplexy, 1—old age, 3—teething, 1—cholera infantum, 1—disease of the heart, 1—canker, 1—childbed, 1.

Under 5 years, 22—between 5 and 20 years, 2—between 20 and 40 years, 9—between 40 and 60 years, 4—over 60 years, 5.

The Symptoms and Diagnosis of Aneurisms of Bones. Symptoms.—Sometimes the pain and uneasiness of this disease is long in establishing itself, but for the most part it comes on suddenly, with a sense of cracking near the joint. After continuing two or three months, a tumor is perceived. This is at first very small, and may escape notice; but after a while becomes prominent, the skin over it then becomes violet-colored and transparent, so as to exhibit the numerous sub-cutaneous veins. On examining the tumor, we find it connected with the bone, and presenting different degrees of consistency at various points. Frequently, on pressing the more resisting portions, we are sensible of a sensation which has been compared to the crackling of parchment, or the breaking of an egg shell, a sign dependent upon the depression and re-elevation of the thin osseous shell of the bone. One of the most characteristic symptoms consists in well-marked pulsations synchronous with those of the heart, and which are suspended when the principal vessel leading to the part is compressed. There is no *bruit de soufflet*. The disease has always been observed in young persons or adults, and has, in different cases, been attributed to various acts of external violence, although, doubtless, the changes in the bone had already commenced. The progress of the disease is generally slow. There is no authentic example in which rupture has occurred, for the ulcerations and hæmorrhages spoken of by some authors probably arose from pulsating cancerous degenerations.

Diagnosis.—An aneurism of a bone may be confounded with one of the soft parts, the symptoms of the two being so very similar; and before *post-mortem* examinations had explained the true nature of these cases, the mistake was inevitable. In the cases treated by Pearson, Scarpa and Lallemand, the disease was supposed to be an aneurism of the articular arteries of the knee, or of the anterior tibial. The osseous aneurism forms one body, as it were, with the subjacent bone, a thin shell of which imparts a sense of crepitation; when the tumor is reduced by slow pressure, we perceive the loss of substance in the bone. The aneurisms unconnected with the bone are more mobile, and impart the *bruit de soufflet* to the ear. A malignant pulsating tumor is distinguished with greater difficulty. The chief points are, that it cannot be partially reduced by pressure to the same extent as an aneurism, while it usually gives the *bruit de soufflet* in auscultation.—*Medico-Chirurgical Review.*

The Age at which Insanity is most Prevalent.—To determine the period of life which furnishes the greatest number of insane persons, it is sufficient to bring together the records, made up under different circumstances. One of them, made at the Bicêtre, where poor men are received; another, at the Salpêtrière, a hospital destined for poor women; the third, at an establishment devoted to the wealthy. From these reports we may conclude:—1st, that the age which furnishes the greatest number of insane, is, for men, that from 30 to 40 years; whilst for women, it is that from 50 to 60 years; 2nd, that the ages which furnish the least, are, for both sexes, childhood, youth, and advanced age; 3rd, that among women, insanity appears earlier than among men, indeed from 29 to 30 years of age; 4th, that the rich are afflicted, in comparison with the total number of insane persons, in a greater proportion than the poor.—*London Lancet.*